

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 CU-04
OES-07 SOE-02 DOE-11 /127 W
-----069346 110916Z /10

R 101426Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6902
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 01745

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, GE, LY
SUBJECT: THE GDR AND LIBYA

REFS: (A) 77 BERLIN 6555 (NOTAL), (B) 77 TRIPOLI 1293
(NOTAL), (C) BERLIN 1636 (NOTAL), (D) TRIPOLI 367
(NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: THE RECENT DEATH OF SED POLITBURO
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SECRETARY WERNER LAMBERZ WHILE ON A MISSION
TO TRIPOLI HAS FOCUSED ATTENTION ON THE
RAPID PACE OF RECENT IMPROVEMENTS IN GDR-LIBYAN
RELATIONS AND ON THE OBVIOUS IMPORTANCE WHICH THE GDR
ATTACHES TO ITS LIBYAN CONNECTION. WE EXPECT THESE
TO CONTINUE AND PROSPER. END SUMMARY.

2. LIBYA WAS THE LAST OF THE FOUR MAGHREB STATES TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH THE GDR (IN JUNE 1973) AND FOR SOME TIME RELATIONS APPEAR TO HAVE DEVELOPED RATHER SLOWLY. HOWEVER, IN THE LAST TWO YEARS THE PACE HAS ACCELERATED SHARPLY IN LINE WITH IMPROVEMENTS IN RELATIONS BETWEEN TRIPOLI AND MOSCOW. THIS RESULTED IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIBYAN EMBASSY IN EAST BERLIN IN OCTOBER 1977 AND IN THE VISIT OF SED POLITBURO SECRETARY HERMANN AXEN (WHO HAS PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SOCIALIST PARTY RELATIONS FIELDS) TO TRIPOLI THAT MONTH (SEE REF B). SINCE THEM LAMBERZ, WHO HAD PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GDR'S EXPANDING ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST, VISITED TRIPOLI NO LESS THAN THREE TIMES. PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS BY AXEN AND LAMBERZ DEMONSTRATED AN INCREASING IDENTITY OF VIEWS BETWEEN THE GDR AND LIBYA AND A WILLINGNESS BY THE GDR TO LINK ITSELF PUBLICLY WITH THE QUADHAFI REGIME IN THE CONDUCT OF ITS AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN POLICY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE GDR GAVE IMPLICIT ALTHOUGH NOT OVERT SUPPORT TO LIBYA AT THE TIME OF ITS BORDER CLASHES WITH EGYPT IN JULY 1977 (REF A). THE GDR HAS PRAISED THE SO-CALLED REJECTIONIST SUMMIT SPONSORED BY QUADHAFI IN TRIPOLI ALTHOUGH IT HAS HELD BACK FROM TOTAL COMMITMENT TO THE REJECTIONIST GROUP

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PRESUMABLY IN THE INTEREST OF RETAINING SOME RESIDUAL INFLUENCE WITH EGYPT AND THE MODERATES.

2. LIBYAN OFFICIALS HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY FREQUENT VISITORS TO EAST BERLIN. THE LAST OF LAMBERZ' FATAL TRIP TO TRIPOLI) WAS THESE (IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING LAMBERZ' FATAL TRIP TO TRIPOLI) WAS A DELEGATION LED BY MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND MINERALS JADALLAH 'AZZUZ AT-TALHI WHICH PARTICIPATED IN THE SECOND MEETING OF THE GDR-LIBYAN JOINT COMMISSION. THIS MEETING PRODUCED REPORTED AGREEMENTS ON ECONOMIC AND SCIENTIFIC/ TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION, A CULTURAL AGREEMENT AND CIVIL AVIATION AND SHIPPING ACCORDS. THE LIBYAN DELEGATION WAS GIVEN PROMINENT ATTENTION IN THE PRESS AND MET WITH BOTH ERICH HONECKER AND WILLI STOPH. THE TONE OF PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS ON BOTH SIDES IN CONNECTION WITH THIS MEETING WAS DECIDEDLY UP-BEAT, SUGGESTING THAT THE TWO SIDES ARE CEMENTING THEIR FUTURE TIES.

3. THE PRINCIPAL ECONOMIC INTEREST OF THE GDR IN

LIBYA IS OBVIOUSLY AS A SOURCE OF PETROLEUM TO
FILL AT LEAST PART OF THE GAP IN SUPPLIES WHICH
GDR PLANNERS CAN SEE DEVELOPING IN THE YEARS TO
COME. IN RETURN, THE GDR CAN PROVIDE A WIDE
RANGE OF INDUSTRIAL AND FINISHED PRODUCTS AND TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIBYAN ECONOMY.
POLITICALLY, LIBYAN POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES IN
AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST, WHILE NOT IDENTICAL TO
THESE OF THE GDR, ARE SIMILAR ENOUGH TO PROVIDE
A BASIS FOR CONSIDERABLE COOPERATION IN THE FUTURE.
4. COMMENT: UNTIL RECENTLY THE LINCH-PIN OF GDR

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BERLIN 01745

POLICY IN NORTH AFRICA HAS BEEN ITS FAIRLY LONG-STANDING
RELATIONSHIP WITH ALGERIA. WHILE WE PERCEIVE NO
PARTICULAR DOWNPLAYING OF THIS CONNECTION BY THE GDR,
IT IS CLEAR THAT THE EAST BERLIN LEADERSHIP HAS

DECIDED TO EXPLOIT ITS EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES IN
LIBYA. SO FAR, IT APPEARS THAT THE GDR SEES ITS
LIBYAN RELATIONS AS A COMPLEMENT TO AND NOT AS A
SUBSTITUTE FOR ITS ALGERIAN CONNECTION. THE REPEATED
PRESENCE IN TRIPOLI OF SUCH HIGH-RANKING SED OFFICIALS
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AS AXEN AND LAMBERZ ATTESTS BOTH TO THE SUBSTANCE
OF THE TIES AND TO THE HIGH LEVEL AT WHICH THEY
ARE BEING CONDUCTED. EAST BERLIN AND TRIPOLI HAVE
ESTABLISHED A CONGENIAL WORKING RELATIONSHIP,
BOTH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC, AND WE EXPECT THESE
TIES TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP. THE LOSS OF THE YOUNGEST,
AND PERHAPS MOST TALENTED, MEMBER OF THE SED
POLITBURO, THE ONE-TIME "CROWN PRINCE OF THE GDR",
SHOULD NOT INHIBIT THIS PROCESS. END COMMENT.
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